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LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST CHEVRON FOR GROSS NEGLIGENCE

Three Attorneys in the Bay Area – John Burris, Matthew Kumin and Patrick Goggin - joined forces to file a lawsuit today on behalf of victims of the Chevron Refinery explosion on August 6, 2012. The explosion and resulting toxic plume released after a pipe failed in the troubled Diesel Unit No. 4 covered areas in which thousands of residents live, work and play.

The lawsuit charges that Chevron was grossly negligent in handling an accident that, with proper safety measures and a timely response, could have been avoided. The attorneys' firms, while filing on behalf of a number of victims, recognize that thousands of residents in the impacted area suffered various damages – from severe respiratory illnesses to frightening moments as they sheltered in place. A class action lawsuit may follow shortly.

While Chevron has initiated an early claims process, the attorneys representing the victims caution that until the full extent of an individual's medical damages are known, many claims may be premature. The attorneys cautioned those filing claims not to sign waivers which may have the effect of cutting off their ability to recover for injuries that may develop later.

Attorney John Burris, whose firm has a long history representing minorities and those impacted by earlier toxic incidents in the Richmond area said that Chevron "failure to act immediately with urgency when the leak was initially discovered was unconscionable. Chevron's conduct needlessly placed the health of thousands at risk. This fire and resulting damage was avoidable."

Chevron, which has operated a refinery in Richmond for over 100 years, continued to run the failed unit despite concerns expressed about its safety in 2011. Burris asserts that a fortune 500 multinational corporation and its claim to be a "good neighbor" should always understand that the City of Richmond and surrounding communities can ill afford to be routinely subjected to environmental toxins. This has to stop and this case may contribute to the institution of more effective safety and prevention policies and practices.

The suit asks the court to require Chevron to implement measures to ensure that the accidental release of toxins does not re-occur. Such measures include: establishing an effective early warning system, creating protocols for shutting down any equipment at the first sign of leaks and damage, and appointing a monitor to oversee implementation of new protocols and installation of new equipment.

John Burris